

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITY OF ALLAH THROUGH
THE HISTORY OF BELIEVERS**



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INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah, the All-Knowing, the Wise and Master of all affairs. Perfect Peace and Blessings be upon His Messenger, Muhammad (SAW), his household, his companions and all members of the Ummah who stick to the right Path.

This material is written in place of late Halima Mustapha. I had, before her call up by Allah given my wives topics to try writing on, in support of my efforts to generate materials of basic education for positive orientation. She was to write or collate stories from the history of Islam, which parents and children and youths can enjoy. I had personally engaged my children in such stories. And I recall that Rabi'atu had on a few occasions specifically asked me to tell them stories.

In our case, I gave greater weight to the stories of those I had in mind, after who, I named our children. This was very inviting for inspiration. Through this, they got to know about the names they are bearing, in agreement with each mother but for the choice of the mother. Muhammad Imran therefore knew by hearing from me that, it was in focus of the common ancestor of Prophet Musa (AS) and Nana Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isa (AS). I often pointed out that Allah has recorded him in the Qur'an as the leader of the most favoured family. Ghazzali was named after Imam Muhammad Hamid Al-Ghazzali. The philosopher, the theologian, the jurist, the mystic. His works put the devil to shame. Umar was named after the Governor of Medina, Ibn AbdulAzeez exclusively identified as Umar II (the Second). This was a learned leader who surrounded himself with scholars and not charlatans, errand boys, praise singers or semi worshippers. Sa'idu Muhammad was named after my father, who introduced me to the treasures of scholars and lighted my taste for the truth. Mustapha was named after the father of my Halima who symbolized leadership with discipline, as the most fitting standard for building a young generation to maturity. He is the homely proof that materialism is inferior to the power of character in making society

better. His humble means and his crystal humility made more impact on any intelligent person than most terminal courses with formal certification. And AbdulJabbar was so named as a sign or proof of Allah compelling whatsoever He pleases. Two of my daughters were named after Fatimatu Zahra of Muhammad (SAW). And I am of many Fatimas. My backing-mother is one. My guardian-mother is another. Indeed, the mother of Ummi Amina is Fatima. Maryam is after Nana Maryam. And Rabi'atu is after the Muslim woman saint, Rabi'atu Adawiyya of Basra. We therefore enjoyed the full right or freedom of naming our children. And we tried to exercise it well, by naming them goodly and consciously.

In the invitation, I have asked Hadiza to try her hand on LIVING IN MARRIAGE, from our experience. Ummi Amina is to try writing on PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE. In my view, if really we can share these, upcoming families may have one or two things to consciously learn. These will hopefully boost the primary objective of promoting positive education for reorientation, in the Ummah and the society at large. This is what directs my writings and special interest in the Family and Political Leadership.

The content of this material are strictly from Qur'an, Hadith collection of Imam Bukhari and the Tafsir of Isma'il bin Kathir. This has influenced my copious admissions from abdurrahman.org and virtualmosque.com.

May Allah accept our goodly intentions and utmost efforts.

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EVIDENCES FROM THE HISTORY OF BELIEVERS

PROPHET IBRAHIM AND RESURRECTION

Behold! Abraham said:
“My Lord! Show me how
Thou givest life to the dead”.
He said, “Dost thou not
Then believe?” He said:
“Yea! But to satisfy
My own understanding”.
He said: “Take four birds;
Tame them to turn to thee;
Put a portion of them
On every hill, and call to them;
They will come to thee
(Flying) with speed.
Then know that Allah
Is Exalted in Power, Wise”.

Qur’an 2: 260.

So, Ibrahim caught four birds, slaughtered them, removed the feathers, tore the birds to pieces and mixed the pieces together. He then placed parts of these mixed pieces on four or seven hills. Ibn ‘Abbas said, “Ibrahim kept the heads of these birds in his hand. Next, Allah commanded Ibrahim to call the birds to him, and he did as Allah commanded him. Ibrahim witnessed the feathers, blood and flesh of these birds fly to each other, and the parts flew each to their bodies, until every bird came back to life and came walking at a fast pace towards Ibrahim, so that the example that Ibrahim was witnessing would become more impressive. Each bird came to collect its head from Ibrahim’s hand, and if he gave the bird another

head the bird refused to accept it. When Ibrahim gave each bird its own head, the head was placed on its body by Allah's leave and power".

From the above, the inquisitiveness of Ibrahim and the guidance of Allah, the unique positive power of Allah are evident. Allah who creates from Nothing, who gives to His creation, who has the reserved power to take or call the life whenever, wherever and however He pleases, is the only one with the power of resurrection. If the beginning from nothing is easy for Allah why and how will resurrecting it be difficult? And how reasonable or sensible will one be to think as such? Only a fool or a daft will contemplate on creations and not believe in Allah, even though they cannot think of a machine or industrial product without the producer. And the same foolish or daft mind will not relate the item of production to the mother or father or teacher of the producer, but will ask: who created Allah? Man is definitely lost, left on his own without guidance on right knowledge and discipline of the truth.

UZAYR WITNESSING RESURRECTION

Or (take) the similitude
Of one who passed
By a hamlet, all in ruins
To its roofs. He said:
"Oh! How shall Allah
Bring it (ever) to life,
After (this) its death?"
But Allah caused him
To die for a hundred years,
Then raised him up (again).
He said: "How long
Didst thou tarry (thus)?"

He said: “(Perhaps) a day
Or part of a day”. He said:
“Nay, thou has tarried
Thus a hundred years;
But look at thy food
And thy drink; they show
No signs of age; and look
At thy donkey: and that
We may make of thee
A Sign unto the people,
Look further at the bones,
How We bring them together
And clothe them with flesh”.
When this was shown clearly
To him, he said: “I know
That Allah hath power
Over all things”.

Qur’an 2: 259.

Mujahid bin Jabr said that the Ayah refers to a man from the Children of Israel, and the village was Jerusalem, after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it and killed its people.

(In ruin) means, it became empty of people.

(Up to its roofs) indicates that the roofs and walls (of the village) fell to the ground. ‘Uzayr stood contemplating about what had happened to that city, after a great civilization used to inhabit it. He said,

(Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death) because of the utter destruction he saw and the implausibility of its returning to what it used to be. Allah said,

(So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him up (again).)

The city was rebuilt seventy years after the man ('Uzayr) died, and its inhabitants increased and the Children of Israel moved back to it. When Allah resurrected 'Uzayr after he died, the first organ that He resurrected were his eyes, so that he could witness what Allah does with him, how He brings life back to his body. When his resurrection was complete, Allah said to him, meaning through the angel,

“How long did you remain (dead)?” He said: “(Perhaps) I remained (dead) a day or part of a day.”)

The scholars said that since the man died in the early part of the day and Allah resurrected him in the latter part of the day, when he saw that the sun was still apparent, he thought that it was the sun of that very day. He said,

“Or part of a day”. He said: “Nay, you have remained (dead) for a hundred years, look at your food and your drink, they show no change”.)

He had grapes, figs and juice, and he found them as he left them; neither did the juice spoil nor the figs become bitter nor the grapes rot.

(And look at your donkey!), “How Allah brings it back to life while you are watching”.

(And thus We have made of you a sign for the people) that Resurrection occurs.

(And clothe them with flesh.)

As-Suddi said, “Uzayr observed the bones of his donkey, which were scattered all around him to his right and left, and Allah sent a wind that collected the bones from all over the area. Allah then brought every bone to its place, until they formed a full donkey made of fleshless bones. Allah then covered these bones with flesh, nerves, veins and skin. Allah sent an angel who blew life in the donkeys’ nostrils, and the donkey started to bray by Allah’s leave.” All this occurred while ‘Uzayr was watching, and this is when he proclaimed,

(He said, “I know (now) that Allah is able to do all things,”) meaning, “I know that, and I did witness it with my own eyes. Therefore, I am the most knowledgeable in this matter among the people of my time.”

THOSE WHO RAN FROM PLAGUE TO AVOID DEATH BUT FAILED

Didst thou not
Turn by vision to those
Who abandoned their homes,
Though they were thousands
(In number), for fear of death?
Allah said to them: “Die”:
Then He restored them to life.
For Allah is full of bounty
To mankind, but
Most of them are ungrateful.

Qur’an 2: 243.

Ibn Abu Hatim related that Ibn ‘Abbas said that these people mentioned herein, were the residents of a village called Dawardan. ‘Ali bin ‘Asim said that they were from Dawardan, a village several miles away from Wasit (in Iraq).

In his Tafsir, Waki’ bin Jarrah said that Ibn ‘Abbas commented,

(Did you (O Muhammad) not think of those who went forth from their homes in thousands, fearing death) that they were four thousand persons who escaped the plague (that broke out in their land). They said, “We should go to a land that is free of death!” When they reached a certain area, Allah said to them:

(“Die.”) and they all died. Afterwards, one of the Prophets passed by them and supplicated to Allah to resurrect them and Allah brought them back to life. So, Allah stated:

(Did you (O Muhammad) not think of those who went forth from their homes in the thousands, fearing death?)

Furthermore, several scholars among the Salaf said that these people were the residents of a city during the time of the Children of Israel. The weather in their land did not suit them and an epidemic broke out. They fled their land fearing death and took refuge in the wilderness. They later arrived at a fertile valley and they filled what is between its two sides. Then Allah sent two angels to them, one from the lower side and the other from the upper side of the valley. The angels screamed once and all the people died instantly, just as the death of one man. They were later moved to a different place, where walls and graves were built around them. They all perished, and their bodies rotted and disintegrated. Long afterwards, one of the Prophets of the Children of Israel, whose name was Hizqil (Ezekiel), passed by them and asked Allah to bring them back to life by his hand. Allah accepted his supplication and commanded him to say, “O rotted bones, Allah commands you to come together.” The bones of everybody were brought together. Allah then commanded him to say, “O bones, Allah commands you to be covered with flesh, nerves and skin.” That also happened while Hizqil was watching. Allah then commanded him to say, “O souls, Allah commands you to return, each to the body that it used to inhabit.” They all came back to life, looked around and proclaimed, “All praise is due to You (O Allah!) and there is no deity

worthy of worship except You.” Allah brought them back to life after they had perished long ago.

WHEN PROPHET MUSA ASKED TO SEE ALLAH

When Musa came
To the place appointed by Us,
And his Lord addressed him,
He said: “O my Lord!
Show (Thyself) to me,
That I may look upon Thee”.
Allah said, “By no means
Canst thou see Me (direct);
But look upon the mount;
If it abide
In its place, then
Shalt thou see Me”.
When his Lord manifested
His glory on the Mount,
He made it as dust,
And Musa fell down
In a swoon. When he
Recovered his senses he said:
“Glory be to Thee! To Thee
I turn in repentance, and I
Am the first to believe”.

Qur’an 7: 143.

Musa (AS) was blessed with the ability to speak to Allah directly, with no intermediaries. In this encounter with the Almighty, he decided to ask for more

than just that. Musa asked to *see* his Lord. Our Lord, Al-Hakeem (The Most Wise), answered with a sign that should make each of our hearts tremble every time we hear of it. Allah told Musa (AS) that he would not be able to see Him, but instead, Allah would show Himself to something much greater than man. He would show himself to a mountain, and if that mountain could withstand the sight of Allah, then Musa (AS) too would be given the opportunity to see Him. According to a *hadith* verified by Al-Hakim, mentioned in tafseer Al-Jalalayn, Allah did not even show Himself in His entirety to the mountain. Rather, Allah revealed a portion of His light that is equivalent to half a nail of a little finger to this mountain, and the mountain crumbled. The *ayah* says that when Allah revealed Himself to the mountain, not only did the mountain collapse, but it broke into pieces the size of grains of sand. Think about it – from mountain to sand in an instant.

No vision can grasp Him,
But His grasp is over
All vision: He is
Above all comprehension,
Yet is acquainted with all things.

Qur'an 6: 103.

ALLAH IS THE LORD OF EVERY AND ALL THINGS

To be a Lord, is to have sole ownership and command over a thing or someone. Like the Master of a slave is his or her lord. However, the lordship of man is only a caricature of the true lordship of Allah. For example, the Master of a slave can instruct him to tell him the truth about an affair that the slave is absolutely sure took place outside the vicinity of his Master and any of his representatives. This typically applied to a beloved slave who was accused of stocking resources of the Kingdom in a room he visited often and never gave anyone access to it. But when

the Master instructed that the room be forcefully opened, no resources were found. He was then asked, to explain. He then explained that he had his attire as a slave (before he was freed and upgraded to a prime minister) in the room. He goes into the room to wear the same attire and remind himself that he is not different except for the favours of the king, for his humility. With Allah, on the Day of Resurrection He can seal up the mouth and ask the limbs of the man to submit what is true. In this world, he freed Aisha the wife of the Prophet from the wicked suspicion/allegation of an illicit relationship, by revealing the truth. Allah revealed to Muhammad (SAW) the truth of past incidents that had been turned upside down or misconstrued. The topmost, is the unity of Allah and the guidance to worship Him alone by mankind. This was and remains the truth about faith. However, Allah does not relate or command DIRECTLY. He is Subtle.

It is not fitting
For a man that Allah
Should speak to him
Except by inspiration,
Or from behind a veil,
Or by the sending
Of a Messenger
To reveal, with Allah's permission,
What Allah wills: for He
Is Most High, Most Wise.

Qur'an 42: 51.

One good example was the case of Prophet Musa (AS) and the duty of the angel of death, when he visited him to take his life. Allah intervened. Narrated Abu Huraira: The angel of death was sent to Musa, when he came to Musa, Musa slapped him on the eye. The angel returned to his Lord and said, 'You have sent me to a slave who does not want to die'. Allah said, "Return to him and tell him

to put his hand on the back of an ox and for every hair that will come under it, he will be granted one year of life”. Musa said, ‘O Lord! What will happen after that?’ Allah replied, “Then death”. Musa said, ‘Let it come now’. Musa (AS) then requested Allah to let him die close to the sacred land so much so that he would be at a distance of a stone’s throw from it’. Abu Huraira added: Allah’s Messenger said, “If I were there, I would show you his grave below the red sand hill on the side of the road”.

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah’s Messenger said, “(The Prophet) Musa was a shy person and used to cover completely because of his extensive shyness. One of the Children of Israel hurt him by saying, ‘He covers his body in this way only because of some defect in his skin, either leprosy or scrotal hernia, or he has some other defect’. Allah wished to clear Musa of what they said about him, so one day while Musa was in seclusion, he took off his clothes and put them on a stone and started taking a bath. When he had finished the bath, he moved towards his clothes so as to take them, but the stone took his clothes and fled; Musa picked up his stick and ran after the stone saying, ‘O stone! Give me my garment!’ Till he reached a group of Bani Israel who saw him naked, and Allah cleared him of what they had accused him of. The stone stopped there and Musa (AS) took and put his garment on and started hitting the stone with his stick. By Allah, the stone still has some traces of the hitting, three, four or five marks. This was what Allah refers to in His saying, “O you who believe! Be you not like those who annoyed Musa. But Allah proved his innocence of that which they alleged. And he was honourable in Allah’s sight”. Qur’an 33: 69.

Have you not thought about the group of the Children of Israel after (the time of) Musa when they said to a Prophet of theirs, “Appoint for us a king and we will fight in Allah’s way.” He said, “Would you then refrain from fighting, if fighting was prescribed for you?” They said, “Why should we not fight in Allah’s way while we have been driven out of our homes and our children (families have been

taken as captives)?” But when fighting was ordered for them, they turned away, all except a few of them. And Allah is All-Aware of the wrongdoers.) Qur’an 2: 246.

Mujahid said that the Prophet (mentioned in the Ayah 2:246 above) is Shamwil (Samuel). Wahb bin Munabbih said: The Children of Israel remained on the straight path for a period of time after Moses. They then innovated in the religion and some of them even worshipped the idols. Yet, there were always Prophets sent among them who would command them to work righteous deeds, refrain from doing evil and who would rule them according to the commands of the Torah. When they (Israelites) committed the evil that they committed, Allah caused their enemies to overwhelm them, and many fatalities fell among them as a consequence. Their enemies also captured a great number of them, and took over large areas of their land. Earlier, anyone who would fight the Israelites would lose, because they had the Torah and the Tabut, which they inherited generation after generation ever since the time of Moses, who spoke to Allah directly. Yet, the Israelites kept indulging in misguidance until some king took the Tabut from them during a battle. That king also took possession of the Torah, and only a few of the Israelites who memorized it remained. The prophethood halted among their various tribes and only a pregnant woman remained of the offspring of Lavi (Levi), in whom the prophethood still appeared. Her husband had been killed, so the Israelites kept her in a house so that Allah may give her a boy, who would be their Prophet. The woman also kept invoking Allah to grant her a boy. Allah heard her pleas and gave her a boy whom she called ‘Shamwil’ meaning ‘Allah has heard my pleas.’ Some people said that the boy’s name was Sham’un (Simeon), which also has a similar meaning.

As that boy grew, Allah raised him to be a righteous person. When he reached the age of prophethood, Allah revealed to him and commanded him to call (his people) to Him and to His Tawhid (Oneness). Shamwil called the Children of

Israel (to Allah) and they asked him to appoint a king over them so that they could fight their enemies under his command. The kingship had also ended among them. Their Prophet said to them, “What if Allah appoints a king over you, would you fulfil your vow to fight under his command?”

(They said, “Why should we not fight in Allah’s way while we have been driven out of our homes and our children?”) meaning, ‘After our land had been confiscated and our children had been taken from us.’ Allah said:

(But when fighting was ordered for them, they turned away, all except a few of them. And Allah is All-Aware of the wrongdoers) meaning, only a few of them kept their promise, but the majority abandoned Jihad and Allah has full knowledge of them.

And their Prophet said to them, “Indeed Allah has appointed Talut (Saul) as a king over you.” They said, “How can he be a king over us when we are fitter than him for the kingdom, and he has not been given enough wealth.” He said: “Verily, Allah has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And Allah grants His kingdom to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All-Knower.” Qur’an 2: 247.

When the Israelites asked their Prophet to appoint a king over them, he appointed Talut (Saul), who was then a soldier. But, Talut was not a descendant of the house of kings among them, which was exclusively in the offspring of Yahudha (Judah). This is why they said:

(How can he be a king over us) meaning, how can he be the king for us,

(when we are fitter than him for the kingdom, and he has not been given enough wealth) They said that Talut was also poor and did not have the wealth that justifies him being king. Some people stated that Talut used to bring water to the people, while others stated that his profession was dyeing skins. The Jews, thus,

disputed with their Prophet while they were supposed to obey him and to say good words to him.

Their Prophet answered them:

(Verily, Allah has chosen him above you) meaning, Allah chose Talut from amongst you while having better knowledge about him. Their Prophet stated, “I did not choose Talut to be your king on my own. Rather, Allah has commanded that upon your request.” Further:

(...and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature.) meaning, Talut is more knowledgeable and honourable than you, and stronger and more patient during combat, and has more knowledge of warfare. In short, he has more knowledge and is stronger than you are. The king should have sufficient knowledge, be fair looking and should have a strong soul and body. He then said:

(And Allah grants His kingdom to whom He wills.) meaning, Allah Alone is the Supreme Authority Who does what He wills and no one can ask Him about His actions, while they will be asked (about their actions by Him). This is because Allah has perfect knowledge, wisdom and kindness with His creation. Allah said:

(And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All-Knower.) meaning, His favour is encompassing and He grants His mercy to whom He wills. He also knows those who deserve to be kings and those who do not deserve it.

And their Prophet said to them: “Verily! The sign of His kingdom is that there shall come to you At-Tabut, wherein is *Sakinah* (peace and reassurance) from your Lord and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind, carried by the angels. Verily, in this is a sign for you if you are indeed believers. Qur’an 2: 248.

Their Prophet then proclaimed, “The sign of the blessings of Talut’s kingship over you is that Allah will give you back the Tabut (wooden box) that has been taken from you.” Allah said:

(wherein is *Sakinah* from your Lord) meaning, peace (or grace) and reassurance. Abdur-Razzaq stated that Qatadah said:

(wherein is *Sakinah*) means grace. In addition, Ar-Rabi’ said that *Sakinah* means mercy. This is also the meaning given by Ibn Abbas, as Al-‘Awfi narrated.

Allah then said:

(...and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind,)

Ibn Jarir related that Ibn Abbas said about this Ayah:

(...and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind,) Meaning, Moses’ staff and the remnants of the Tablets. This is the same Tafsir of Qatadah, As-Suddi, Ar-Rabi’ bin Anas and ‘Ikrimah, who added, “And also the Torah.” Abdur-Razzaq said that he asked Ath-Thawri about the meaning of,

(...and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind,)

Ath-Thawri said, “Some said that it contained a pot of manna and the remnants of the Tablets, while some others said that it contained (Moses’) staff and two shoes (and refer to 20:12).”

Allah then said:

(...carried by the angels.)

Ibn Jurayj stated that Ibn Abbas said, “The angels came down while carrying the Tabut between the sky and the earth, until they placed it before Talut while the people were watching.” As-Suddi said, “The Tabut was brought to Talut’s house,

so the people believed in the prophethood of Sham'un (Simeon) and obeyed Talut.”

The Prophet then said:

(Verily, in this is a sign for you) testifying to my truth in what I was sent with, my prophethood, and my command to you to obey Talut,

(if you are indeed believers.) in Allah and the Hereafter.

Allah is above the estimation of unbelievers.

ALLAH HAS POWER OVER ALL THINGS AND ENABLES WHATEVER PLEASES HIM

All creations submit to Him. This may be directly like by the Salat of a believer to Allah. It can be indirectly by subjecting cattle to the use of mankind, for feeding on its beef and milk. And man uses horse for game and war. These are homely examples, apart from great ones like the revolution of the earth and the service of the sun to mankind and other creations. And all only reveal or reaffirm the unique unity, power, wisdom, pleasure of Allah etc.

And Allah has created
Every animal from water:
Of them there are some
That creep on their bellies;
Some that walk on two legs;
And some that walk on four.
Allah creates what He wills;
For verily Allah has power
Over all things.

Qur'an 24: 45.

He it is that cleaveth
The day-break (from the dark):
He makes the night
For rest and tranquility,
And the sun and moon
For the reckoning (of time):
Such is the judgement
And ordering of (Him),
The Exalted in Power,
The Omniscient.

Qur'an 6: 96.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (SAW) said, "Paradise and the Hell Fire argued, and the Fire said, 'I have been given the privilege of receiving the arrogant and the tyrants'. Paradise said, 'What is the matter with me? Why do only the weak and the humble among the people enter me?' On that, Allah said to Paradise, 'You are My Mercy which I bestow on whoever I wish of My Servants'. Then Allah said to Hell Fire, 'You are My (means of) Punishment by which I punish whoever I wish of My slaves. And each one of you will have its fill' ". This is His two creations interacting with each other. And Allah who is Just in all respects enlightened them about their ignorance.

Narrated Unais Ibn Amr: Ahban bin Aus said, 'I was amongst my sheep. Suddenly a wolf caught a sheep and I shouted at it'. The wolf sat on its tail and addressed me saying, 'Who will look after it (i.e. the sheep) when you will be busy and not able to look after it? Do you forbid me the provision which Allah has provided me?' Abhan added, 'I clapped my hands and said: By Allah I have never seen anything more curious and more wonderful than this!' On that the wolf said, 'There is something more curious and more wonderful than this; that is, Allah's Messenger in those palm trees inviting people to Allah (Islam)'. Unais

bin Amr further said, ‘Then Ahban went to Allah’s Messenger and informed him what happened and embraced Islam’. Only Allah (SWT) can enable interaction between His creatures that will normally not do so, to do so, meaningfully. The shepherd was not a believer before he met the Messenger of Allah. The pleasure of Allah may therefore not exclude the non-believers, just like His benefits like rain, intellect, breast milk etc. are not reserved for believers in this world.

Narrated Anas bin Malik: The Prophet (SAW) once climbed the mountain of Uhud, with Abubakar, Umar and Uthman. The mountain shook with them. The Prophet said (to the mountain), “Be firm O Uhud! For on you there are no more than a Prophet, a Siddiq and two martyrs”.

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah: The Prophet used to stand by a stem of a date-palm tree (while delivering a sermon). When the pulpit was placed for him we heard that stem crying like a pregnant she-camel till the Prophet got down from the pulpit and placed his hands over it. Therefore, in this instance believers were witnesses to the power of Allah. He enabled them to hear what is normally not heard.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (SAW) said, “None spoke in cradle but three: (The first was) Jesus, there was a man (the second) from Bani Israel called Juraij. While he was offering his prayers, his mother came and called him. He said (to himself), ‘Shall I answer her or keep on praying?’ (He went on praying) and did not answer her. His mother said, ‘O Allah! Do not let him die till he sees the face of a prostitute’. So while he was in his hermitage, a lady came and sought to seduce him, but he refused. So she went to a Shepherd and presented herself to him to commit illegal sexual intercourse with her and then later she gave birth to a child and claimed that it belonged to Juraij. The people came to him and dismantled his hermitage and expelled him out of it and abused him. Juraij performed the ablution and offered prayer, and then came to the child and said,

‘O child! Who is your father?’ The child replied, ‘The Shepherd’. (After hearing this) the people said, ‘We shall rebuild your hermitage, of gold’, but he said, ‘No, of nothing but mud’. (The third was the hero of the following story) A lady from Bani Israel was nursing her child at her breast when a handsome rider passed by her. She said, ‘O Allah! Make my child like him’. On that the child left her breast, and facing the rider said, ‘O Allah! Do not make me like him’. The child then started to suck her breast again. Abu Huraira further said, ‘As If I were now looking at the Prophet sucking his finger (in a way of demonstration)’. After a while the people passed by, with a lady slave and she (i.e. the child’s mother) said, ‘O Allah! Do not make my child like this (slave girl)!’ On that the child left her breast and said, ‘O Allah! Make me like her’. When she asked why, the child replied, ‘The rider is one of the tyrants while this slave girl is falsely accused of theft and illegal sexual intercourse’ ”.

This is the story of the people of the Elephant, in brief, and summarized. It has already been mentioned in the story of the People of the Ditch that Dhu Nuwas, the last king of Himyar, a polytheist — was the one who ordered killing the People of the Ditch. They were Christians and their number was approximately twenty thousand. None of them except a man named Daws Dhu Tha’laban escaped. He fled to Ash-Sham where he sought protection from Caesar, the emperor of Ash-Sham, who was also a Christian. Caesar wrote to An-Najashi, the king of Ethiopia (Abyssinia), who was closer to the home of the man. An-Najashi sent two governors with him: Aryat and Abrahah bin As-Sabah Abu Yaksum, along with a great army. The army entered Yemen and began searching the houses and looting in search of the king of Himyar (Dhu Nuwas). Dhu Nuwas was eventually killed by drowning in the sea. Thus, the Ethiopians were free to rule Yemen, with Aryat and Abrahah as its governors. However, they continually disagreed about matters, attacked each other, fought each other and warred against each other, until one of them said to the other, “There is no need for our two armies to fight.

Instead let us fight each other (in a duel) and the one who kills the other will be the ruler of Yemen.” So the other accepted the challenge and they held a duel. Behind each man was a channel of water (to keep either from fleeing). Aryat gained the upper hand and struck Abrahah with his sword, splitting his nose and mouth, and slashing his face. But ‘Atawdah, Abrahah’s guard, attacked Aryat and killed him. Thus, Abrahah returned wounded to Yemen where he was treated for his injuries and recovered. He thus became the commander of the Abyssinian army in Yemen.

Then the king of Abyssinia, An-Najashi wrote to him, blaming him for what had happened (between him and Aryat) and threatened him, saying that he swore to tread on the soil of Yemen and cut off his forelock. Therefore, Abrahah sent a messenger with gifts and precious objects to An-Najashi to appease him and flatter him, and a sack containing soil from Yemen and a piece of hair cut from his forelock. He said in his letter to the king, “Let the king walk upon this soil and thus fulfil his oath, and this is my forelock hair that I send to you.” When An-Najashi received this, he was pleased with Abrahah and gave him his approval. Then Abrahah wrote to An-Najashi saying that he would build a church for him in Yemen the like of which had never been built before. Thus, he began to build a huge church in San’a, tall and beautifully crafted and decorated on all sides. The Arabs called it Al-Qullays because of its great height, and because if one looked at it, his cap would be in danger of falling off as he tilted his head back. Then Abrahah Al-Ashram decided to force the Arabs to make their pilgrimage to this magnificent church, just as they had performed pilgrimage to the Ka’bah in Makkah. He announced this in his kingdom (Yemen), but it was rejected by the Arab tribes of ‘Adnan and Qahtan. The Quraysh were infuriated by it, so much so that one of them journeyed to the church and entered it one night. He then relieved himself in the church and ran away (escaping the people). When its custodians saw what he had done, they reported it to their king, Abrahah, saying;

“One of the Quraysh has done this in anger over their House in whose place you have appointed this church.” Upon hearing this, Abrahah swore to march to the House of Makkah (the Ka’bah) and destroy it stone by stone. Muqatil bin Sulayman mentioned that a group of young men from the Quraysh entered the church and started a fire in it on an extremely windy day. So the church caught on fire and collapsed to the ground. Due to this Abrahah prepared himself and set out with a huge and powerful army so that none might prevent him from carrying out his mission. He took along a great, powerful elephant that had a huge body the like of which had never been seen before. This elephant was called Mahmud and it was sent to Abrahah from An-Najashi, the king of Abyssinia, particularly for this expedition. It has also been said that he had eight other elephants with him; their number was also reported to be twelve, plus the large one, Mahmud — and Allah knows best. Their intention was to use this big elephant to demolish the Ka’bah. They planned to do this by fastening chains to the pillars of the Ka’bah and placing the other ends around the neck of the elephant. Then they would make the elephant pull on them in order to tear down the walls of the Ka’bah all at one time. When the Arabs heard of Abrahah’s expedition, they considered it an extremely grave matter. They held it to be an obligation upon them to defend the Sacred House and repel whoever intended a plot against it. Thus, the noblest man of the people of Yemen and the greatest of their chiefs set out to face him (Abrahah). His name was Dhu Nafr. He called his people, and whoever would respond to his call among the Arabs, to go to war against Abrahah and fight in defence of the Sacred House. He called the people to stop Abrahah’s plan to demolish and tear down the Ka’bah. So the people responded to him and they entered into battle with Abrahah, but he defeated them. This was due to Allah’s will and His intent to honour and venerate the Ka’bah.

The army continued on its way until it came to the land of Khath’am where it was confronted by Nufayl bin Habib Al-Kath’ami along with his people, the Shahrani

and Nahis tribes. They fought Abrahah but he defeated them and captured Nufayl bin Habib. Initially he wanted to kill him, but he forgave him and took him as his guide to show him the way to Al-Hijaz.

When they approached the area of At-Ta'if, its people — the people of Thaqif — went out to Abrahah. They wanted to appease him because they were fearful for their place of worship, which they called Al-Lat. Abrahah was kind to them and they sent a man named Abu Righal with him as a guide. When they reached a place known as Al-Mughammas, which is near Makkah, they settled there. Then he sent his troops on a foray to capture the camels and other grazing animals of the Makkans, which they did, including about two hundred camels belonging to Abdul-Muttalib. The leader of this particular expedition was a man named Al-Aswad bin Mafsud. According to what Ibn Ishaq mentioned, some of the Arabs used to satirize him (because of the part he played in this historical incident). Then Abrahah sent an emissary named Hanatah Al-Himyari to enter Makkah, commanding him to bring the head of the Quraysh to him. He also commanded him to inform him that the king will not fight the people of Makkah unless they try to prevent him from the destruction of the Ka'bah. Hanatah went to the city and he was directed to Abdul-Muttalib bin Hashim, to whom he relayed Abrahah's message. Abdul-Muttalib replied, "By Allah! We have no wish to fight him, nor are we in any position to do so. This is the Sacred House of Allah, and the house of His Khalil, Ibrahim, and if He wishes to prevent him (Abrahah) from (destroying) it, it is His House and His Sacred Place (to do so). And if He lets him approach it, by Allah, We have no means to defend it from him." So Hanatah told him, "Come with me to him (Abrahah)." And so Abdul-Muttalib went with him. When Abrahah saw him, he was impressed by him, because Abdul-Muttalib was a large and handsome man. So Abrahah descended from his seat and sat with him on a carpet on the ground. Then he asked his translator to say to him, "What do you need?" Abdul-Muttalib replied to the translator, "I want the king to return my

camels which he has taken from me which are two hundred in number.” Abrahah then told his translator to tell him, “I was impressed by you when I first saw you, but now I withdraw from you after you have spoken to me. You are asking me about two hundred camels which I have taken from you and you leave the matter of a house which is (the foundation of) religion and the religion of your fathers, which I have come to destroy and you do not speak to me about it?” Abdul-Muttalib said to him, “Verily, I am the lord of the camels. As for the House, it has its Lord Who will defend it.” Abrahah said, “I cannot be prevented (from destroying it).” Abdul-Muttalib answered, “Then do so.” It is said that a number of the chiefs of the Arabs accompanied Abdul-Muttalib and offered Abrahah a third of the wealth of the tribe of Tihamah if he would withdraw from the House, but he refused and returned Abdul-Muttalib’s camels to him. Abdul-Muttalib then returned to his people and ordered them to leave Makkah and seek shelter at the top of the mountains, fearful of the excesses which might be committed by the army against them. Then he took hold of the metal ring of the door of the Ka’bah, and along with a number of Quraysh, he called upon Allah to give them victory over Abrahah and his army. Abdul-Muttalib said, while hanging the ring onto the Ka’bah’s door, “There is no matter more important to any man right now than the defence of his livestock and property. So, O my Lord! Defend Your property. Their cross and their cunning will not be victorious over your cunning by the time morning comes.” According to Ibn Ishaq, then Abdul-Muttalib let go of the metal ring of the door of the Ka’bah, and they left Makkah and ascended to the mountains tops. Muqatil bin Sulayman mentioned that they left one hundred animals (camels) tied near the Ka’bah hoping that some of the army would take some of them without a right to do so, and thus bring about the vengeance of Allah upon themselves.

When morning came, Abrahah prepared to enter the sacred city of Makkah. He prepared the elephant named Mahmud. He mobilized his army, and they turned

the elephant towards the Ka'bah. At that moment Nufayl bin Habib approached it and stood next to it, and taking it by its ear, he said, "Kneel, Mahmud! Then turn around and return directly to whence you came. For verily, you are in the Sacred City of Allah." Then he released the elephant's ear and it knelt, after which Nufayl bin Habib left and hastened to the mountains. Abrahah's men beat the elephant in an attempt to make it rise, but it refused. They beat it on its head with axes and used hooked staffs to pull it out of its resistance and make it stand, but it refused. So they turned him towards Yemen, and he rose and walked quickly. Then they turned him towards Ash-Sham and he did likewise. Then they turned him towards the east and he did the same thing. Then they turned him towards Makkah and he knelt down again. Then Allah sent against them the birds from the sea, like swallows and herons. Each bird carried three stones the size of chickpeas and lentils, one in each claw and one in its beak. Everyone who was hit by them was destroyed, though not all of them were hit. They fled in panic along the road asking about the whereabouts of Nufayl that he might point out to them the way home. Nufayl however, was at the top of the mountain with the Quraysh and the Arabs of the Hijaz observing the wrath which Allah had caused to descend on the People of the Elephant. Nufayl then began to say, "Where will they flee when the One True God is the Pursuer for Al-Ashram is defeated and not the victor. Ibn Ishaq reported that Nufayl said these lines of poetry at that time,

"Didn't you live with continued support we favoured you all with a revolving eye in the morning (i.e. a guide along the way). If you saw, but you did not see it at the side of the rock covered mountain that which we saw. Then you will excuse me and praise my affair, and do not grieve over what is lost between us. I praised Allah when I saw the birds, and I feared that the stones might be thrown down upon us. So all the people are asking about the whereabouts of Nufayl, as if I have some debt that I owe the Abyssinians." Ata' bin Yasar and others have said that all of them were not struck by the torment at this hour of retribution. Rather some

of them were destroyed immediately, while others were gradually broken down limb by limb while trying to escape. Abrahah was of those who was broken down limb by limb until he eventually died in the land of Khath'am. Ibn Ishaq said that they left (Makkah) being struck down and destroyed along every path and at every water spring. Abrahah's body was afflicted by the pestilence of the stones and his army carried him away with them as he was falling apart piece by piece, until they arrived back in San'a. When they arrived there he was but like the baby chick of a bird. And he did not die until his heart fell out of his chest. So they claim. Ibn Ishaq said that when Allah sent Muhammad with the prophethood, among the things that he used to recount to the Quraysh as blessings that Allah had favoured them with of His bounties, was His defending them from the attack of the Abyssinians. Due to this they (the Quraysh) were allowed to remain (safely in Makkah) for a period of time. Thus, Allah said,

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the Owners of the Elephant? Did He not make their plot go astray? And He sent against them birds, in flocks (*Ababil*). Striking them with stones of *Sijjil*. And He made them like 'Asf *Ma'kul*. Qur'an 105: 1-5.

ALLAH LOVES THOSE WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS

Those who sincerely submit to Allah will always meet His love, both in this world and in the hereafter. The believers will be the only successful ones in the hereafter, even though the benefits or favours of Allah are for all His creations in this world. But all the good things and times of this world, this life, are short and will come to an end. The difference of believers in this world is that Allah ensures that the hereafter that is eternal is the priority investment of their good deeds. This is why those who sincerely submitted in ordered Jihad are described as not dead by Allah. And the Messenger of Allah expounded by saying that, although the

fellow believers will wish them not taken by Allah, they will not prefer to return, except for another jihad and martyrdom.

On those who believe
And work deeds of righteousness,
Will (Allah) Most Gracious
Bestow Love.

Qur'an 19: 96.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (SAW) said that Angel Jibril said, “Here is Khadija coming to you with a dish of food or a tumbler containing something to drink. Convey to her a greeting from her Lord (Allah) and give her the glad tidings that she will have a palace in Paradise built of *Qasab*, wherein there will be neither noise nor any fatigue”.

Narrated Anas bin Malik: Two of the companions of the Prophet departed from him on a dark night and were led by two lights like lamps (going in front of them from Allah as a miracle) lighting the way in front of them, and when they parted, each of them was accompanied by one of these lights till they reached their (respective) houses.

Narrated Aisha: There was a black slave girl belonging to an Arab tribe and they manumitted her but she remained with them. The slave girl said, “Once one of their girls (of that tribe) came out wearing a red leather scarf decorated with precious stones. It fell from her or she placed it somewhere. A kite passed by that place, saw it lying there and mistaking it for a piece of meat, flew away with it. Those people searched for it but they did not find it. So they accused me of stealing it and started searching me and even searched my private parts”. The slave girl further said, “By Allah! While I was standing (in that state) with those people, the same kite passed by them and dropped the red scarf and it fell amongst them. I told them, ‘This is what you accused me of and I was innocent and now

this is it' ". Aisha added: That slave girl came to Allah's Messenger and embraced Islam. She had a tent or a small room with a low roof in the Mosque. Whenever she called on me, she had a talk with me and whenever she sat with me, she would recite the following: "The day of the scarf (band) was one of the wonders of our Lord, verily He rescued me from the disbelievers' town". Aisha added: "Once I asked her, 'What is the matter with you? Whenever you sit with me, you always recite this poetic verses'. On that she told me the whole story".

ALLAH HEARS AND RESPONDS

Believers must recognize that they are creatures of Allah who have nothing on their own except what Allah has made available for possession and use, with attendant rules. And because man will remain permanently in need except by guidance to find contentment, believers are required to ask Allah to meet or enable them meet every and all of their needs, wants and fancies. And it is most intelligent that one asks for anything **best** from one who has and does not need. Other than Allah there is no such one. O ye men! It is ye that have need of Allah: but Allah is the One free of all wants, worthy of all praise. Qur'an 35: 15. To Allah belong all things in heaven and earth: verily Allah is He (that is) free of all wants, worthy of all praise. Qur'an 31: 26.

When My servants
Ask thee concerning Me,
I am indeed
Close (to them): I listen
To the prayer of every
Supplicant when he calleth on Me:
Let them also, with a will,
Listen to My call,
And believe in Me:

That they may walk

In the right way.

Qur'an 2: 186.

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “Three persons of a people before you, were on a journey when they were overtaken by a storm and therefore they took shelter in a cave. A rock slipped down from the mountain and blocked the exit of the cave.

One of them said: “The only way for deliverance left is to beseech Allah in the name of some virtuous deed.” Thereupon one of them supplicated, “O Lord, my parents were very old, I used to offer them their nightly drink of milk before my children and the other members of the family. One day I went astray far away in search of green trees and could return only after my parent had gone to sleep. When I had milked the animals and brought their nightly drink to them, they were fast asleep, but I did not like to disturb them, nor would give any part of the milk to my children and other members of the family till after my parents had their drink. Thus, with the vessel in hand, I awaited their awakening till the flush of dawn, while the children cried out of hunger at my feet. When they woke up, they had their drink. O Lord, if I did this thing seeking only your pleasure, then do relieve us of the distress wrought upon us by this rock.” Thereupon, the rock moved a little but that not enough to let them pass out.

Then the second man supplicated: “O Lord, I had a cousin whom I loved her more passionately than any loves a woman. I tried to seduce her but she would have none of me, till in a season of great hardship due to famine, she approached me (for help) and I gave her one hundred and twenty Dinars on condition that she would have sexual intercourse with me. She agreed, and when we got together and I was just going to have intercourse with her, she pleaded: ‘Fear Allah, and do not break the seal unlawfully’; whereupon I moved away from her, despite the

fact that I desired her most passionately; and I let her keep the money I had given her. O Lord, if I did this thing seeking only your pleasure, then do move the distress in which we find ourselves.” Again the rock moved a little but not enough to let them pass out.

Then the third supplicated: “O Lord, I hired some labourers and paid them their dues, but one of them left leaving behind what was due to him. I invested it in business and the business prospered greatly. After a time the labourer came back and said: ‘O servant of Allah, hand over to me my wages.’ I said to him: ‘All that you see is yours – camels, cattle, goats and slaves.’ He said: ‘Don’t play joke with me, O servant of Allah.’ I assured him: ‘I am not joking.’ So he took all of it sparing nothing. O Lord, if I did this seeking only for your pleasure, do relieve us of our distress.” The rock then moved away, and all the three came out of the cave safe and sound.”

Narrated Sharik bin Abdullah bin Abi Namir: I heard Anas bin Malik saying, ‘On a Friday a person entered the main Mosque through the gate facing the pulpit while Allah’s Messenger was delivering the Khutba. The man stood in front of Allah’s Messenger and said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! The livestock are dying and the roads are cut off; so please pray to Allah for rain’. Allah’s Messenger (SAW) raised both his hands and said, “O Allah! Bless us with rain! O Allah bless us with rain! O Allah bless us with rain!” By Allah, we could not see any trace of cloud in the sky and there was no building or house between us and (the mountains of) Sila. A heavy cloud like a shield appeared from behind it (i.e. Sila Mountain). When it came in the middle of the sky, it spread and then rained. By Allah! We could not see the sun for a week. Next Friday a person entered through the same gate and at that time Allah’s Messenger was delivering the Friday’s Khutba. The man stood in front of him and said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! The livestock are dying and the roads are cut off, please pray to Allah to withhold rain’. Allah’s Messenger raised both his hands and said, “O Allah! Round about

us and not on us. O Allah! On the plateaus, on the mountains, on the hills, in the valleys and on the places where trees grow”. So the rain stopped and we came out walking in the sun’.

Narrated Amr bin Maimun: Abdullah bin Mas’ud said, ‘While Allah’s Messenger was praying beside the Ka’ba, there were some Quraysh people sitting in a gathering. One of them said, ‘Don’t you see this (who does good deeds just to show off)? Who amongst you can go and bring the dung, blood and abdominal contents (intestines etc.) of the slaughtered camels of the family of so-and-so and then wait till he prostrates and put that in between his shoulders?’ The most unfortunate amongst them (Uqba bin Abi Mu’ait) went (and brought them) and when Allah’s Messenger prostrated, he put them between his shoulders. The Prophet (SAW) remained in prostration and they laughed so much that they fell on each other. A passer-by went to Fatima, who was a young girl in those days. She came running and the Prophet was still in prostration. She removed them and cursed upon the Quraysh on their faces. When Allah’s Messenger completed his prayer, he said, “O Allah! Take revenge on Quraysh”. He said so thrice and added, “O Allah! Take revenge on Amr bin Hisham, Utba bin Rabi’a, Shaiba bin Rabi’a, Al-Walid bin Utba, Umaiya bin Khalaf, Uqba bin Abi Mu’ait and Umar bin Al-Walid”. Abdullah added, ‘By Allah! I saw all of them dead in the battle field on the day of Badr and they were dragged and thrown in the Qalib (a well) at Badr’. Allah’s Messenger (SAW) then said, “Allah’s curse has descended upon the people of the Qalib (well)”.

ALLAH IS ALWAYS WITH THE FAITHFUL

Faith or Iman in Islam means the combination of expressing submission and compliance without reservations. The summary of it is to be truthful in the right knowledge and discipline of Guidance. The opposite is Hypocrisy, best personified by Iblis. Its related characteristics are to tell lies either by creation of

what is non-existent or denial of what is existent; giving a word or promise or undertaking or covenant and betraying or eating it; and abuse of trust of any kind or form, in the context of whatever Allah and His Messenger have decided. This is what qualifies such a believer, hosting in the deepest part of Hell Fire. The faithfuls are with Allah.

The glory in the Grace
And the Bounty from Allah,
And in the fact that
Allah suffereth not
The reward of the Faithful
To be lost (in the least).

Qur'an 3: 171.

Allah hath purchased of the Believers
Their persons and their goods;
For theirs (in return)
Is the Garden (of Paradise);
They fight in His Cause,
And slay and are slain:
A promise binding on Him
In Truth, through the Law,
The Gospel, and the Qur'an:
And who is more faithful
To his Covenant than Allah?
Then rejoice in the bargain
Which ye have concluded:
That is the achievement supreme.

Qur'an 9: 111.

Allah willed to test three who were a leper, a blind man and a bald-headed man.

So, he sent them an angel who came to the leper and said, “What thing do you like most?” He replied, “Good colour and good skin, for the people have a strong aversion to me.” The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given a good colour and beautiful skin. The angel asked him, “What kind of property do you like best?” He replied, “Camels (or cows).” (The narrator is in doubt, for either the leper or the bald-headed man demanded camels and the other demanded cows.) So he (i.e. the leper) was given a pregnant she-camel, and the angel said (to him), “May Allah bless you in it.”

The angel then went to the bald-headed man and said, “What thing do you like most?” He said, “I like good hair and wish to be cured of this disease, for the people feel repulsion for me.” The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given good hair. The angel asked (him), “What kind of property do you like best?” He replied, “Cows.” The angel gave him a pregnant cow and said, “May Allah bless you in it.”

The angel went to the blind man and asked, “What thing do you like best?” He said, “(I like) that Allah may restore my eye-sight to me so that I may see the people.” The angel touched his eyes and Allah gave him back his eye-sight. The angel asked him, “What kind of property do you like best?” He replied, “Sheep.” The angel gave him a pregnant sheep.

Afterwards, all the three pregnant animals gave birth to young ones, and multiplied and brought forth so much that one of the (three) men had a herd of camels filling a valley, and one had a herd of cows filling a valley, and one had a flock of sheep filling a valley.

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a leper, went to the leper and said, “I am a poor man, who has lost all means of livelihood while on a

journey. So none will satisfy my need except Allah and then you. In the Name of Him Who has given you such nice colour and beautiful skin, and so much property, I ask you to give me a camel so that I may reach my destination.” The man replied, “I have many obligations (so I cannot give you).” The angel said, “I think I know you; were you not a leper to whom the people had a strong aversion? Weren’t you a poor man, and then Allah gave you (all this property)?” He replied, “(This is all wrong), I got this property through inheritance from my fore-fathers.” The angel said, “If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before.”

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a bald man, went to the bald man and said to him the same as he told the first one, and he too answered the same as the first one did. The angel said, “If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before.”

The angel, disguised in the shape of a blind man, went to the blind man and said, “I am a poor man and a traveller, whose means of livelihood have been exhausted while on a journey. I have nobody to help me except Allah, and after Him, you yourself. I ask you in the Name of Him Who has given you back your eye-sight to give me a sheep, so that with its help, I may complete my journey.” The man said, “No doubt, I was blind and Allah gave me back my eye-sight; I was poor and Allah made me rich; so take anything you wish from my property. By Allah, I will not stop you for taking anything (you need) of my property which you may take for Allah’s sake.” The angel replied, “Keep your property with you. You (i.e. the three men) have been tested and Allah is pleased with you and is angry with your two companions.”

Abu Hurayrah has said that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) mentioned a man of the Bani Israel saying:

He asked another to lend him a thousand dinars. The lender asked him to bring witnesses but the borrower said, "Allah is sufficient as a witness." The lender asked him to furnish a surety but the borrower again asserted, "Allah is sufficient as a surety." The lender agreed, "You are correct," and lent him money for a specified period.

The debtor went across the sea. When he had finished his work, he looked for a conveyance to take him back for the punctual repayment of his debt, but he did not find any conveyance. So he took a piece of wood and made a hole in it. He inserted in it the one thousand dinars and a letter to the lender and closed the hole tightly.

He took the piece of wood to the sea and said, "O Allah! You know well that I took a loan of one thousand dinars from so-and-so. He demanded a surety from me but I told him that Allah's surety was enough and he accepted Your Guarantee. He then demanded a witness and I told him that Allah was sufficient as a witness. No doubt I have tried much to find a conveyance so that I might pay back his money but could not find one, so I hand this money over to you."

Saying that, he threw the piece of wood into the sea till it went far out into it, and then he went away. Meanwhile he kept looking for a conveyance to take him to the lender's place.

One day, the lender came out of his house to see whether a ship had arrived bringing his money, and all of a sudden, he saw a piece of wood in which was the money. He took it home to use as firewood. When he sawed it, he found his money and the letter inside it.

Shortly after that, the debtor came with a thousand dinars and said, "By Allah! I had been trying to get a boat so I could bring you your money but failed to get one before the one I have come by."

The lender said, “Allah has delivered on your behalf the money you sent in the piece of wood. So you may keep your thousand dinars and go, guided on the right path.”

Surah As-Saffaat – (50. Then they will turn to one another, mutually questioning.) (51. A speaker of them will say: “Verily, I had a companion (in the world,)”) (52. “Who used to say: `Are you among those who believe.) (53. (That) when we die and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be indebted (Madinun)”) (54. (The speaker) said: “Will you look down”) (55. So he looked down and saw him in the midst of the Fire.) (56. He said: “By Allah! You have nearly ruined me.”) (57. “Had it not been for the grace of my Lord, I would certainly have been among those brought forth (to Hell).”) (58. “Are we then not to die (any more)”) (59. “Except our first death, and we shall not be punished”) (60. Truly, this is the supreme success!) (61. For the like of this let the workers work.)

These verses talk about the story of two men among the Children of Israel who were partners. Abu Ja’far bin Jarir recorded that Furat bin Tha’labah Al-Bahrani said concerning the Ayah,

(Verily, I had a companion)

“There were two men who were partners and had collected eight thousand Dinars. One of them had a craft and the other did not. The one who had a craft said to the other, ‘You do not have a craft, so I think I will divide the money with you and leave you.’ So he left him.

Then the first man bought a house, belonging to a king who had died, for the price of one thousand Dinars. He called his companion and showed him the house, saying, ‘What do you think of this house I bought it for one thousand Dinars.’ He said, ‘How beautiful it is.’ When he went out he said, ‘O Allah, this companion

of mine has bought this house for one thousand Dinars; I ask You for one of the houses of Paradise – and he gave one thousand Dinars in charity.’ Then as much time passed as Allah willed should pass.

The first man married a woman with a dowry of one thousand Dinars, and invited his companion and made food for him. When he came, he said, ‘I have married this woman with a dowry of one thousand Dinars.’ He replied; ‘How beautiful this is.’ And when he left, he said, ‘O Lord, my companion has married a woman with a dowry of one thousand Dinars; I ask you for a wife from among Al-Hur Al-‘Iyn’ — and he gave one thousand Dinars in charity. Then as much time passed as Allah willed should pass.

Then the first man bought two gardens for two thousand Dinars, then he called his companion and showed them to him. He said, ‘I have bought these two gardens for two thousand Dinars.’ He replied, ‘How beautiful this is.’ When he came out, he said, ‘O Lord, my companion has bought two gardens for two thousand Dinars; I ask you for two gardens in Paradise’ — and he gave two thousand Dinars in charity.

Then the angel came to them and took their souls in death. He took the one who had given his money in charity and put him in a house that he liked. There, there was a woman who was so beautiful that the ground shinned under her, then he (the angel) took him to two gardens and gave him other things which are known only to Allah. The man said, ‘This is like a man who has such and such.’ The angel said, ‘That is exactly what it is; this house, these gardens and this wife are all for you.’ The man said, ‘I had a companion who used to say: Are you among those who believe?’ It was said to him, ‘He is in Hell.’ He said, ‘Will you look down?’ So he looked down and saw him in the midst of Hell. At this, he said:

(By Allah! You have nearly ruined me. Had it not been for the grace of my Lord, I would certainly have been among those brought forth (to Hell).)”

Allah's statement; (Allah will grant after hardship, ease.)

This is a sure promise from Him, and indeed, Allah's promises are true and He never breaks them; Allah's say (Verily, along with every hardship is relief. Verily, along with every hardship is relief.) Qur'an 94: 5-6.

There is a relevant Hadith that we should mention here. Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Huraira said,

“A man and his wife from an earlier generation were poor. Once when the man came back from a journey, he went to his wife saying to her, while feeling hunger and fatigued, ‘Do you have anything to eat?’ She said, ‘Yes, receive the good news of Allah's provisions.’ He again said to her, ‘If you have anything to eat, bring it to me.’ She said, ‘Wait a little longer.’ She was awaiting Allah's mercy. When the matter was prolonged, he said to her, ‘Get up and bring me whatever you have to eat, because I am real hungry and fatigued.’ She said, ‘I will. Soon I will open the oven's cover, so do not be hasty.’ When he was busy and refrained from insisting for a while, she said to herself, ‘I should look in my oven.’ So she got up and looked in her oven and found it full of the meat of a lamb, and her mortar and pestle was full of seed grains; it was crushing the seeds on its own. So, she took out what was in the mortar and pestle, after shaking it to remove everything from inside, and also took the meat out that she found in the oven.”

Abu Hurayrah added, “By He in Whose Hand is the life of Abu Al-Qasim (i.e. Prophet Muhammad) had she taken out what was in her mortar and not emptied it fully by shaking it, it would have continued crushing the seeds until the Day of Resurrection.)”

ALLAH LOVES EXCEEDING SACRIFICE

This is for those who specifically choose to. Abu Bakr is the best example. He gave all he had, for Allah and His Messenger.

Narrated Abu Huraira: A man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said; ‘I am hard pressed by hunger.’ He (SAW) sent a word to one of his wives who replied: ‘By Him Who has sent you with the Truth, I have nothing except water.’ Then he sent the same message to another (wife) and received the same reply. He sent this message to all of them (i.e. his wives) and received the same reply. Then he (SAW) said, “Who will entertain this (man) as guest?” One of the Ansar said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I will.’ So he took him home and said to his wife: ‘Serve the guest of Messenger of Allah (SAW).’

Another narration is: The Ansari asked his wife: ‘Have you got anything?’ She answered: ‘Nothing, except a little food for the children.’ He said: “Keep them busy with something, and when they ask for food put them to sleep.’ When the guest enters, he extinguished the light and give him the impression that they were also eating. So they sat down and the guest ate and they passed the night hungry. When he came to the Prophet (SAW) in the morning, he said to him, “Allah admired what you did with your guest last night.”

FEAR OF ALLAH IS PART OF FAITH

Narrated Abu Sa’id: The Prophet mentioned a man from the people of the past or those who preceded you. The Prophet said a sentence meaning: Allah had given him wealth and children. When his death approached, he said to his sons, ‘What kind of a father have I been to you?’ They replied, ‘You have been a good father’. He told them that he had not presented any good deed before Allah, and if Allah should get hold of him He would punish him. ‘So look!’ he added, ‘When I die, burn me, and when I turn into coal, crush me, and when there comes a windy day, scatter my ashes in the wind’. The Prophet added, “Then by Allah, he took a firm promise from his children to do so, and they did so. (They burnt him after his death) and threw his ashes on a windy day. Then Allah commanded to his ashes, “Be”, and behold! He became a man standing! Allah said, “O My slave!

What made you do what you did?” He replied, ‘For fear of You’. Nothing saved him then but Allah’s Mercy (so Allah forgave him).”

ALLAH HATES ARROGANCE

In chapter 28 of the Qur’an, believers are told the story of Qarun, for guidance.

(76. Verily, Qarun was of Musa’s people, but he behaved arrogantly towards them. And We gave him of the treasures, that of which the keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men. Remember when his people said to him: “Do not exult. Verily, Allah likes not those who exult.”) (77. “But seek, with that which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world; and be generous as Allah has been generous to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the mischief-makers.”)

Ibn Abbas said:

(Verily, Qarun was of Musa’s people,) “He was the son of his paternal uncle.” This was also the view of Ibrahim An-Nakha’i, Abdullah bin Al-Harith bin Nawfal, Sammak bin Harb, Qatadah, Malik bin Dinar, Ibn Jurayj and others; they all said that he was the cousin of Musa (AS). Ibn Jurayj said: “He was Qarun bin Yashar bin Qahith, and Musa was the son of Imran bin Qahith.

(And We gave him of the treasures,) meaning, of wealth;

(that of which the keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men.) Groups of strong men would not have been able to carry them because they were so many. Al-A’mash narrated from Khaythamah, “The keys of Qarun’s treasure were made of leather, each key like a finger, and each key was for a separate storeroom. When he rode anywhere, the keys would be carried on sixty mules

with white blazes on their foreheads and white feet.” Other views were also given, and Allah knows best.

(Remember when his people said to him: “Do not exult. Verily, Allah likes not those who exult.”) means, the righteous ones among his people exhorted him. By way of sincere advice and guidance, they said: “Do not exult in what you have,” meaning, ‘do not be arrogant and proud of your wealth.’

(Verily, Allah likes not those who exult.) Ibn Abbas said, “This means, those who rejoice and gloat.” Mujahid said, “It means those who are insolent and reckless, and do not thank Allah for what He has given them.” His saying:

(But seek, with that which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world;) means, ‘use this great wealth and immense blessing Allah has given you to worship your Lord and draw closer to Him by doing a variety of good deeds which will earn you reward in this world and the Hereafter.’

(and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world;) ‘That which Allah has permitted of food, drink, clothing, dwelling places and women. Your Lord has rights over you, your self has rights over you, your family has rights over you, and your visitors have rights over you. So give each of them their due.’

(and be generous as Allah has been generous to you,) ‘Be generous to His creatures, as He has been generous to you.’

(and seek not mischief in the land.) meaning: ‘do not let your aim be to spread corruption on earth and do harm to Allah’s creation.’

(Verily, Allah likes not the mischief-makers.)

(Qur’an 28:78 – He said: “This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess.” Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him

generations, men who were stronger than him in might and greater in the amount they had collected? But the criminals will be questioned of their sins.)

Allah informs us how Qarun responded to the exhortations of his people when they sought to guide him

(He said: “This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess.”) meaning, ‘I have no need of your advice; Allah has only given me this wealth because He knows that I deserve it and because He loves me.’ In other words, ‘He has given it to me because He knows that I am fit for this.’ This is like the Ayat:

(When harm touches man, he calls upon Us; then when We have changed it into a favour from Us, he says: “Only because of knowledge I obtained it.”) (Qur’an 39: 49) An alternative interpretation of this Ayah says that the meaning is: “Only because of what Allah knows about me did I obtain this favour.” This is like His saying:

(And truly, if We give him a taste of mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: “This is from me.”) (Qur’an 41: 50) meaning, “I deserved it.” Imam Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam explained this Ayah very well. Concerning the phrase,

(He said: “This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess.”) He said: “Were it not for the fact that Allah is pleased with me and knows my virtue, He would not have given me this wealth.” And He said:

(Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him generations, men who were stronger than him in might and greater in the amount they had collected?) This is what those who have little knowledge say when they see a person whom Allah has granted a lot of wealth; they say that if he did not deserve it, Allah would not have given it to him.

(Qur'an 28:79 – So, he went forth before his people in his finery. Those who were desirous of the life of the world, said: “Ah, would that we had the like of what Qarun has been given! Verily, he is the owner of a great fortune.”) (80. But those who had been given knowledge said: “Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for those who believe and do righteous deeds, and this none shall attain except the patient.”)

Here, Allah tells us how Qarun went forth one day before his people with his magnificent regalia; wearing his fine clothes, accompanied by his fine horses, his servants and retinue. When those whose desires and inclinations were for the world saw his adornments and splendour, they wished that they could have the same as he had been given, and said:

(Ah, would that we had the like of what Qarun has been given! Verily, he is the owner of a great fortune.) meaning, ‘he is very lucky and has a great share in this world.’ When the people of beneficial knowledge heard this, they said to them

(Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for those who believe and do righteous deeds,) ‘Allah’s reward to His believing, righteous servants in the Hereafter is better than what you see,’ as is reported in the following Hadith:

Allah has prepared for His righteous servants what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and the heart of a human cannot comprehend. Recite, if you wish: ‘No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.’ Qur'an 32: 17

(and this none shall attain except the patient.) As-Suddi said: “None shall reach Paradise except for the patient” — as if this were the completion of the statement made by the people of knowledge. Ibn Jarir said, “This applies only to those who patiently forsake the love of this world, seeking the Hereafter. It is as if this is

part of what the people of knowledge said, but it is made part of the Words of Allah, stating this fact.”

(Qur’an 28:81 – So, We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no group to help him against Allah, nor was he one of those who could save themselves.) (82. And those who desired his position the day before, began to say: “Know you not that it is Allah Who expands the provision or restricts it to whomsoever He pleases of His servants. Had it not been that Allah was Gracious to us, He could have caused the earth to swallow us up! Know you not that the disbelievers will never be successful.”)

After telling us about Qarun’s conceit and pride in his adornments, and how he was arrogant towards his people and transgressed against them, Allah then tells us how he and his dwelling place were swallowed up by the earth. This was also reported in the Sahih by Al-Bukhari from Salim, who said that his father told him that the Messenger of Allah said:

(While a man was dragging his lower garment, he was swallowed up and he will remain sinking down into the earth until the Day of Resurrection.) He also recorded something similar from Salim from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet. Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Sa’id said, “The Messenger of Allah said:

(When a man among the people who came before you went out wearing two green garments, walking proudly and arrogantly, Allah commanded the earth to swallow him up, and he will remain sinking down into it until the Day of Resurrection.)

(Then he had no group to help him against Allah, nor was he one of those who could save themselves.) means, his wealth, group, servants and retinue were of no avail to him; they could not protect him from the wrath and vengeance of

Allah. Nor could he help himself or save himself. There was no one to help him, neither himself nor anybody else.

Allah's saying:

(And those who had desired his position the day before,) means, those witnessed him with his finery and said:

(Those who were desirous of the life of the world, said: "Ah, would that we had the like of what Qarun has been given! Verily, he is the owner of a great fortune.") When he was swallowed up in the earth, they began to say:

(Know you not that it is Allah Who expands the provision or restricts it to whomsoever He pleases of His servants.) Wealth does not indicate that Allah is pleased with its owner, for Allah gives and withholds, allows times of difficulty and times of ease, raises and lowers, His is the most complete wisdom and most convincing proof. According to a Hadith narrated by Ibn Mas'ud,

(Allah has allotted character among you just as He has allotted your provision. Allah gives wealth to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love, but He gives Faith only to those whom He loves.)

(Had it not been that Allah was Gracious to us, He could have caused the earth to swallow us up!) meaning, 'were it not for the kindness and grace of Allah towards us, we could have been swallowed up by the earth just as he was swallowed up, because we wanted to be like him.'

(Know you not that the disbelievers will never be successful.) He was a disbeliever, and the disbelievers will never be successful before Allah in this world or in the Hereafter.

(Qur'an 28:83 – That is the home of the Hereafter, We shall assign to those who do not want to exalt themselves in the land nor cause corruption. And the good

end is for those who have Taqwa.) (84. Whosoever brings good, he shall have the better thereof; and whosoever brings evil, then those who do evil deeds will only be requited for what they used to do.)

In these verses, Allah tells us that He has made the home of the Hereafter, and its eternal delights which will never change or fade away, for His believing, humble servants who do not rebel against the truth with pride and oppression in the land. They do not exalt themselves above the creatures of Allah, arrogantly oppressing them and spreading corruption among them. Ikrimah said that this phrase referred to haughtiness and arrogance. Ibn Jurayj said:

(those who do not want to exalt themselves in the land) “Arrogance and tyranny, (nor cause corruption) committing sins.” Ibn Jarir recorded that Ali said, “If a man wants the straps of his sandals to be better than the straps of his companion’s sandals, then he is one of those referred to in the Ayah,

(That is the home of the Hereafter, We shall assign to those who do not want to exalt themselves in the land nor cause corruption. And the good end is for those who have Taqwa.) This is understood to mean that if his intention is to show off and appear better than others, then that is to be condemned, as it was reported in the Sahih that the Prophet said:

(It has been revealed to me that you should be humble to the extent that none of you boasts to others or mistreats others.) But if a person simply likes to look good, then there is nothing wrong with that. It was recorded that a man said: “O Messenger of Allah, I like to have my garment looking good and my shoes looking good, is this a kind of arrogance?” The Prophet said: (No, for Allah is beautiful and loves beauty...)

And Allah says:

(Whosoever brings good,) meaning, on the Day of Resurrection,

(he shall have the better thereof;) meaning, the reward of Allah is better than the good deeds of His servant — how can it not be, when Allah has multiplied it many times over. This is the position of generosity. Then Allah says:

(and whosoever brings evil, then those who do evil deeds will only be requited for what they used to do.) This is like the Ayah,

(And whoever brings an evil deed, they will be cast down on their faces in the Fire. (And it will be said to them) “Are you being recompensed anything except what you used to do”) Qur’an 27: 90. This is the position of generosity and justice.

ALLAH HATES THAT HIS WORD IS TRADED FOR THIS WORLD

This is of particular relevance to scholars and political leaders who enter into contract and with one another, for which the followers or subjects or citizens actually suffer, while they or one party of them gains. Those who employ, use or invoke Allah to subdue citizens or lieutenants for the use or manipulation of public trusts are the most popular. But the burden of proper duties and rights is too much to bear, if only they know. Worse still some rascals who pretend to be bearers of the truth as religious leaders also do it. But there should be no compulsion or manipulation in religion.

And recite to them the story of him to whom We gave Our Ayat, but he threw them away; so Shaytan followed him up, and he became of those who went astray. And had We willed, We would surely have elevated him therewith, but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desires. So his parable is the parable of a dog: if you drive him away, he pants, or if you leave him alone, he (still) pants. Such is the parable of the people who reject Our Ayat. So relate the stories, perhaps they may reflect. Evil is the parable of the people who rejected Our Ayat, and used to wrong themselves. Qur’an 7: 175-177.

Abdur-Razzaq recorded that Abdullah bin Mas`ud said that Allah's statement, (And recite to them the story of him to whom We gave Our Ayat, but he threw them away) "Is about Bal'am bin Ba'ura a man from the Children of Israel."

Shu'bah and several other narrators narrated this statement from Mansur who got it from Ibn Mas'ud. Sa'id bin Abi 'Arubah narrated that Qatadah said that Ibn Abbas said, "He is Sayfi, son of Ar-Rahib."

Qatadah commented that Ka'b said, "He was a man from Al-Balqla' (a province of Jordan) who knew Allah's Greatest Name. He used to live in Bayt Al-Maqdis with the tyrants."

Al-'Awfi reported that Ibn Abbas said, "He is Bal'am bin Ba'ura, a man from Yemen whom Allah had given the knowledge of His Ayat, but he abandoned them."

Malik bin Dinar said, "He was one of the scholars of the Children of Israel whose supplication was acceptable. They used to seek his lead in supplication in times of difficulty. Allah's Prophet Musa sent him to the King of Madyan to call him to Allah. That king appeased him and gave him land and gifts, and he reverted from the religion of Musa and followed the king's religion."

Imran bin 'Uyaynah narrated that Husayn said that Imran bin Al-Harith said that Ibn Abbas said, "He is Bal'am son of Ba'ura." Similar was said by Mujahid and Ikrimah. Therefore, it is well-known that this honourable Ayah was revealed about a man from the Children of Israel in ancient times, according to Ibn Mas'ud and several others among the Salaf.

Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn Abbas said, "He is a man from the city of the tyrants (Jerusalem) whose name was Bal'am and who knew Allah's Greatest Name." Ali bin Abi Talhah also reported that Ibn Abbas that he said, "When Musa and those with him went to the city of the tyrants (Jerusalem), the cousins

of Bal'am and his people came to him and said, "Musa is a strong man, and he has many soldiers. If he gains the upper hand over us, we will be destroyed. Therefore, supplicate to Allah that He prevents Musa and those with him from prevailing over us." Bal'am said, "If I supplicate to Allah that He turns back Musa and those with him, I will lose in this life and the Hereafter." They kept luring him until he supplicated against Musa and his people, and Allah took away what he bestowed on him (of knowledge). Hence Allah's statement,

(but he threw them away; so Shaytan followed him up). Allah said next,

(And had We willed, We would surely have elevated him therewith) from the filth of this earthly life through the Ayat that We gave him knowledge of,

(but he clung to the earth), he became interested in the adornment of this life and its delights. He indulged in the lusts of life and its joys and was deceived by it, just as life deceived others like him, without sound comprehension or a good mind. Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Yasar narrated from Salim, from Abu An-Nadr that when Musa entered the land of Bani Canaan in the area of Ash-Sham (Greater Syria), the people of Bal'am came to him, saying, "This is Musa, son of Imran with the Children of Israel. He wants to drive us out from our land, kill us and replace us with the Children of Israel. We are your people and have no other dwelling area. You are a person whose supplication is acceptable (to Allah), so go out and supplicate to Allah against them." He said, "Woe to you! Here is Allah's Prophet (Musa) with whom the angels and believers are! How can I supplicate against them when I know from Allah what I know?" They said, "We have no other dwelling area." So they kept luring and begging him until he was tempted by the trial and went on his donkey towards Mount Husban, which was behind the Israelite military barracks. When he proceeded on the Mount for a while, the donkey sat down and refused to proceed. He got off the donkey and struck it until it stood up again and he rode it. The donkey did the same after a

little while, and he struck it again until it stood up... So he proceeded and tried to supplicate against Musa and his people. However, Allah made his tongue mention his people with evil and the Children of Israel with good instead of his people, who protested, “O Bal’am! What are you doing? You are supplicating for them and against us!” He said, “It is against my will. This is a matter that Allah has decided.” He then said to them, as his tongue was made to loll out of his mouth, “Now I have lost this life and the Hereafter.” This Ayah was revealed about the story of Bal’am son of Ba’ura.

(And recite to them the story of him to whom We gave Our Ayat, but he threw them away.), until,

(perhaps they may reflect.) Allah said next,

(So his parable is the parable of a dog: if you drive him away, he pants, or if you leave him alone, he (still) pants.) Scholars of Tafsir have conflicting opinions regarding the meaning of this Ayah. Some scholars said that it refers to the end of Bal’am’s tongue which flickered out of his mouth, as in the story narrated from Ibn Ishaq, from Salim, from Abu An-Nadr. Therefore, his example is the example of the dog, its tongue pants regardless of whether it is driven away or not. It was also said that the meaning here is a parable of this man — and his like — concerning their misguidance, persisting the wrong path and not being able to benefit from faith or comprehend what they are being called to. So his example is that of a dog which pants whether it was driven away or left alone. The person described here does not benefit from the advice or the call to faith, just as if the advice and call never occurred. Allah said in another Ayah,

(It is the same to them (disbelievers) whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe.) Qur’an 2: 6.

(Whether you ask forgiveness for them (hypocrites) or ask not forgiveness for them — (and even) if you ask seventy times for their forgiveness — Allah will not forgive them.) Qur'an 9: 80. Etc. It was also said that the meaning here, is that the heart of the disbeliever, the hypocrite and the wicked is weak and devoid of guidance. Therefore, it keeps faltering. Similar was narrated from Al-Hasan Al-Basri.

Next, Allah said to His Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

(So relate the stories, perhaps they may) the Children of Israel, who have knowledge of the story of Bal'am and what happened to him when Allah allowed him to stray and expelled him from His mercy. Allah favoured him by teaching him His Greatest Name, by which, if He is asked, He will grant, and if He is called upon, He answers. But Bal'am used it in disobedience to Allah and invoked Him against His own party of the people of faith, followers of His servant and Messenger during that time, Musa, the son of Imran, peace be upon him, whom Allah spoke to directly,

(perhaps they may reflect.) and avoid Bal'am's behaviour, for Allah has given the Jews knowledge and made them superior to the Bedouins surrounding them. He gave them the description of Muhammad (SAW) which would allow them to recognize him, as they recognize their own children. They, among people, have the most right to follow, aid and support Muhammad (SAW), in obedience to their Prophets who informed them of him and commanded them to follow him. As a result, whoever among them defies the knowledge in their Books or hides it from the servants, Allah will place disgrace on him in this life, followed by humiliation in the Hereafter.

(Evil is the parable of the people who rejected Our Ayat.) Allah says, evil is the example of the people who deny Our Ayat in that they are equated with dogs that have no interest but to collect food and satisfy lusts. Thus, whoever goes out of

the area of knowledge and guidance, and seeks satisfaction for his lusts and vain desires, is just like a dog; what an evil example. The Sahih recorded that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said,

(The evil example is not suitable for us: he who goes back on his gift is just like the dog that eats its vomit.) Allah's statement,

(and they used to wrong themselves.) means, Allah did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves by rejecting guidance, not obeying the Lord, being content with this life that will soon end, all the while seeking to fulfil desires and obey lusts.

(Qur'an 7:178 – Whomsoever Allah guides, he is the guided one, and whomsoever He sends astray, — then those! They are the losers.)

Allah says, whomever He leads aright, then none can lead him to misguidance, and whomever He leads astray, will have acquired failure, loss and sure misguidance. Verily, whatever Allah wills occurs; and whatever He does not will, does not occur. A Hadith narrated from Abdullah bin Mas'ud reads,

(All praise is due to Allah, Whom we praise and seek help, guidance and forgiveness from. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils within ourselves and from the burden of our evil deeds. He whom Allah guides, will never be misled; and he whom He misguides, will never have one who will guide him. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah without partners and that Muhammad (SAW) is His servant and Messenger.)